DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE SUBJECT: THE SITUATION IN IRAQ BRIEFER: COLONEL DANIEL ROPER, DIRECTOR, U.S. ARMY AND MARINE CORPS COUNTERINSURGENCY CENTER MODERATOR: CHARLES "JACK" HOLT, CHIEF, NEW MEDIA OPERATIONS, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS TIME: 11:00 A.M. EDT DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

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MR. HOLT: Well, Colonel Roper, thank you for joining us here for the Bloggers Roundtable this morning.

With us this morning is Colonel Daniel Roper, who is the director of the Counterinsurgency Center, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps at Fort Leavenworth.

Sir, if you've got an opening statement, sir, the floor is yours.

COL. ROPER: Sure. Thank you, Jack.

First of all, I'd just like to thank everybody for the interest and for this opportunity to discuss this important subject and, obviously, the fifth anniversary of the beginning of Iraqi Freedom provides a good opportunity for some assessment and some introspection. So I, again, appreciate the opportunity for that.

What I'd like to do is briefly tell you what the Counterinsurgency Center does and what we're about, and then transition from that into some observations that I got from trips to Iraq this past summer and this past fall, a couple different trips and what that suggests on where we're heading in the future. So if that's okay with you, that's what I'd like to start with.

MR. HOLT: Yes, sir. That'll be great.

COL. ROPER: The Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is part of the Combined Arms Center of the U.S. Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Bill Caldwell. We were established in 2006 by then-Lieutenant General Petraeus when he was the CAC in command here at Leavenworth, in conjunction with Lieutenant General Mattis, his counterpart in the Marine Corps at that time.

When -- they were going through the heavy lifting developing Field Manual 3-24, or the counterinsurgency doctrine that I'm sure everybody on this net is well aware of. And during the development of the Manual, General Petraeus determined that he needed to have an organization that served as his focal point to help him connect the dots between all the different efforts going on with respect to developing and then implementing the counterinsurgency doctrine. So that was the genesis of this center.

Our mission on behalf of the Army and the Marine Corps is to provide oversight for COIN integration, to improve capability to operate in a full-spectrum counterinsurgency environment. And to do that, we've got six lines of effort.

One of them is to integrate different COIN initiatives. The second is researching best practices from the past in order to prepare ourselves for the future. Third is improvement of doctrine. Fourth is working on education, the professional military education for our soldiers, leaders, and Marines. Fifth is advising leaders and organizations.

And sixth is to conduct outreach to other military and civilian entities, and that one I just want to kind of put the bottom line up front. That is an extremely important area as we view counterinsurgency, that it is not just done by soldiers and Marines, guys wearing uniforms. Counterinsurgency is part of a broader effort and, therefore, we think it's extremely important to have opportunities like this to discuss counterinsurgency, so maybe we reach some audiences that may believe this is just a military operation, because clearly it is not.

So in a sentence, our mission is really to assist the Army and the Marine Corps in the implementation and application of the body of thought that's contained in our counterinsurgency doctrine, Field Manual 3-24. Because as we all understand, just because you write something doesn't mean it's implemented uniformly across the force.

Briefly, we interact with counterparts in the Air Force as an organization similar to us out at Nellis Air Force Base. The Marine Corps has an organization that's complementary at Quantico. We're very heavily involved in our combat training centers. We reach different parts of academia -- Harvard, United States Military Academy, and others. We're involved with think tanks around the country.

We're starting to get more involved with international partners. We've got a lot of partnership going on with the Canadian army, the units that are preparing to go to Afghanistan.

I just came back from Europe from a several-week trip in the U.K., Germany, and France, discussing U.S. counterinsurgency approaches and exchanging ideas and best practices with them. One of my guys is getting ready to go to the Netherlands tomorrow to do the same thing.

So this is an important topic, not just for the U.S. Army, but for many like-minded nations that understand that in an era of what we see as persisting conflict, this is something that we simply have to take head-on, and we cannot avoid it, no matter how challenging it may be.

That sums up what the Counterinsurgency Center does. Now I'd like to briefly describe -- give you a quick overview of the two trips I took to Iraq recently in the capacity as the director of the COIN Center, and then open it up to your questions, because I'd really like to hear what interests you.

In August and September I was over in Iraq, primarily looking at operational level integration -- meaning looking at the different headquarters that have some responsibility with respect to the counterinsurgency effort.

From MNFI, General Petraeus's headquarters, Multinational Corps Iraq, then Lieutenant General Odierno's headquarters, along with MNSTCI, headed by General Dubik, interfacing with the Iraqi Ground Forces Command Task Force 134 overseeing theater detention operations, and the Iraqi Advisory Group that works on the transition teams for the units that are out there partnering with the Iraqi units.

When I went back in the months of October and November, the focus was more on the tactical application of the counterinsurgency. And I tried to get around to as many places as I could, with U.S. units of varying types -- infantry, cav, sustainment, civil affairs, aviation. Spent some time talking to different MIT teams, several different provincial reconstruction teams, the PRTs; talked to different Australian advisers that were over there; had meetings with Iraqi army, Iraqi police, visits to combat outposts, JSSs and the like -- to try to get essentially a broad survey of what was going on, not a scientific analysis looking at every single piece of it, because that obviously would have been logistically a little bit beyond our capability at that time.

And what I saw then is some things that we're seeing play out right now. This was the post-execution of the surge plus-up in the forces, so they were all on the ground and had been there for a while. And thus it was -- the implementation of that phase of the strategy was well under way.

And one of the biggest phenomena that went clear across the board was al Qaeda was off balance. And it was pretty likely that they were going to be heading north to Mosul. And I spent some time in Mosul, and there was a clear understanding of that with the unit that was up there at the time, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cav, and then their replacement, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is up there right now.

And to a man, people were talking about the fact that al Qaeda was off balance was something to be cognizant of, but they have a proven regenerative capacity. They've done it before and they've done it again, and not to be deluded into false optimism, there's plenty of tough fighting ahead for coalition forces and the Iraqi forces.

And even from today's paper you can see that that's something that's not going away.

There was a noticeable marked increase in momentum in coalition operations across the force. And again, this was from virtually every place that I got the opportunity to talk to the guys or observe what they were doing. And it was due partially to the increase in forces that were on the ground.

There were sufficient forces to disrupt al Qaeda and some of the other hostile parties. There was an improvement, although it's somewhat mixed. And the Iraqi security forces, some of them advance better than others, in varying degrees of fleshing out some of the people that have dual allegiances.

The Sunnis were becoming part of the process. The concerned local citizens that we read about every day. In some areas, that plays out positively. In other areas, obviously, that raises some concerns with the Shi'a. But in general, the trend was moving in the right direction.

The bottom line, it seemed as if the momentum was -- because collectively, the general Iraqi population was tired of the guys that would come into the neighborhood and absolutely cause bad things to happen. And that's -- you obviously are well aware of the Anbar awakening and other phenomena that are described like that. But a lot of it was attributable to the fact that the people were tired of it and they knew they couldn't trust them.

I'll just tell you quickly the impressions I got when I was over there, the things that struck me the most on both those trips is the coalition forces were increasingly focused on success, and they weren't saying "winning." They were saying "succeeding," because ultimately, winning or losing is a political decision of all the parties involved.

But what they were doing and what they were asked to do, they were seeing the results of the labor and the results of the sacrifices that their troops have been making.

The criticality of context is -- really hit me right between the eyes. It's much more than intelligence. Intelligence is about finding bad guys; context is about understanding all the dynamics in the environment, most of which has got nothing to do with the bad guys. The bad guys just take advantage of those dynamics.

The militants were not so much ideologues, which sometimes we tend to get that impression as we read the paper, that this is all just al Qaeda -- religious fanatics that are totally focused on reestablishing the caliphate. That's not the guys that were pulling the trigger most of the time. It's people who were trying to take advantage of some opportunity or to find some way to protect their family or to make some money.

We talk about whole-government approach within the U.S. military. The British call it a comprehensive approach. We haven't fully realized that yet. The full integration

of all elements of our national power and our capability hasn't made its way to the ground to the degree that's necessary to fight and succeed, in a sustained manner, a comprehensive COIN operation.

You've heard the bumper sticker "All politics are local"? Well, all politics and all security's local, and therefore the guys on the ground are the ones that we have to empower. I think we're doing a good job on that, but they are the face of the coalition, and they need to stay as our main effort.

And what was most impressive to me was our very junior leaders that were true warrior statesmen that could go from one end of the spectrum to the other, depending on the needs of the requirement. Guys who had been kicking in doors in a neighborhood a month prior to me getting in their particular neighborhood, were describing how they had evolved to get into the soft-knock scenario and spent more time passing out candy and playing with the kids in the street than they did firing their weapons. And it was -- again, the sign of positive things to -- positive things that were going on and positive things to come.

With that, I'll close my presentation and, again, I'd really like to hear what's on your mind and what questions I can try to answer for you. Thanks.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much.

Christian, why don't you get us started?

- Q Okay. Good morning, Colonel Roper. This is Christian Lowe with militarydotcom. I actually have two questions, but I'll hit the first one first since we've got a lot of people here. And if I can follow up later, that'd be great. You mentioned early on in your opening remarks that you've talked with your counterparts in the UK, Germany and France. Could you elaborate on that a little bit? I -- that happens in the context of some pressure being put on NATO allies to increase their counterinsurgency techniques and training for the fight in Afghanistan. Could you talk to us a little bit about what you talked with them about and what their reaction was and how much -- how willing they are to embrace counterinsurgency like the U.S. has?
- COL. ROPER: Okay. I think I heard about 60 percent of your question; you kind of faded in and out. But I think what you asked is what was the subject of the discussions that I had with the British, the French, the Dutch and other counterparts -- Canadian counterparts with respect to what we're doing in counterinsurgency. Is that correct?
- Q And -- yes, but -- and its -- the nexus with their operations in Afghanistan because of the pressure that's been put on them to do more in that realm in that fight.
- COL. ROPER: What I would tell you -- the things that were pretty much -- almost unanimous from different audiences and different countries, so it wasn't just one group of people, was almost -- as the subject came up, the first thing they would say is that the

American military's progress in counterinsurgency while at war was extremely impressive. And it clearly put the U.S. counterinsurgency thinking at the very forefront of the way militaries need to pursue counterinsurgency. It didn't suggest that we had all the answers, but it suggested we were further along in understanding the nature of this environment than anybody else and that they wanted to understand what we're doing and what's the trajectory that we're on -- where we're heading.

As -- going back to the question on political pressure and the discussions that were going on, everybody had an opinion. I don't think anybody really was focused too much on the political aspect of it. If nothing else, the questions that were raised at the senior levels caused some discussion amongst professionals at junior levels. So it was a positive interaction. I did not detect anybody who would -- who took offense at it. They thought it was -- and again, quite frankly, they looked in the mirror and said, "Hey, we've all got a lot to learn." And the U.S. is clearly not suggesting that we've got it all figured out, either, but we are on a trajectory that gets us to where we need to go.

Q Are there going to be any exchanges? Were there any outgrowths of this? Are officers with NATO allies coming to the Counterinsurgency Center at Leavenworth?

COL. ROPER: Exactly. As a matter of fact, we've got -- the Canadian Army is sending us an officer with Afghanistan experience. We expect him here June or July at the latest. I've also made that opportunity available to several other countries on behalf of my boss and they're considering the opportunity to collaborate right now. And again, we think it -- that type of collaboration makes us all better and it helps to disseminate the views across the force and across the coalition. So at my level -- and again, I was mostly interacting between lieutenant colonels and major generals and everybody in between -- there's a tremendous interest in exchanging ideas. And what I characterize is we all need to copy each other's homework because we all need to go in as well-prepared as we possibly can.

Q Okay. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Jason.

Q Well, sir, this is Jason Sigger with the Armchair Journalist.

I was curious in your time over there if you had anything to see about -- or say about the chlorine vehicle IEDs that were going on about a year or so ago. I haven't seen anything the news about that and I was wondering if, in your opinion, the insurgents might have abandoned that tactic.

COL. ROPER: Are you referring to the MRAP?

Q No, no, the chlorine vehicle IEDs that were being -- used by the insurgents to pop timed containers of chlorine around civilian areas?

COL. ROPER: In the areas I traveled in, that was not a topic of discussion or a topic of particular concern.

I mean, it was known that it had been done, but nobody had found anything in the operations and intel updates that I've participated in that made -- (background noise) -- a topic that was rising to the top.

Q Thanks very much.

COL. ROPER: Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay.

And David?

Q Hi. This is David Axe from Wired's Danger Room and my own blog War is Boring.

So sir, from your comments and also from your slides that Jack sent along before the call-in, you make it pretty clear that military operations -- counterinsurgency operations sort of exist within a political context, and at the end of the day, it's political reconciliation that means -- I don't want to use the word "victory," necessarily, but it's the political reconciliation that's more important than combat operations. So -- but -- to -- so then at what point does a military force have to just throw up its hands and say, "You know, we've done all we can. This is in the hands of politicians"? Are we at that point in Iraq yet?

COL. ROPER: I'm not certain that anybody in uniform can fully answer that question. I mean, there's got to be a dialogue between the senior military leaders and the political decision-makers on where we are, what progress we're making, what price we're paying for that progress and what opportunities for potential success exist. And I'm making the assumption that -- I'm pretty confident that that type of discussion's occurring at the most senior levels of Multi-National Forces-Iraq, the embassy and their bosses back here.

I think we're seeing more objectively is the counterinsurgency strategy that was supported by the surge and resourced by the surge has yielded benefits in the security area, which is really the down payment for the potential political reconciliation. In everything you read and everything you hear, obviously there's some real frustration with how quickly that occurs and all I can tell you is I'm not qualified to judge it -- what -- at what pace or tempo the political reconciliation should occur. But I think we are essentially opening the hole, to use a football analogy -- where the offensive line's opened the hole and now the quarterback and the running back's got to get their act together and take advantage of the hole that's been opened because you can only hope -- keep it open for so long. So again, ultimately that's a political decision. But I agree with the background of your question.

Q Okay, thanks.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Andrew.

Q Colonel, Andrew Lubin from The Military Observer. How are you, sir?

COL. ROPER: Great, thanks.

Q Good. Sir, a fascinating PowerPoint that you sent over to Jack, who forwarded it on to us.

Sir, a kind of a broad question here. I see the Army is still actively pushing their \$260 billion-plus Army of the future, which sets them to beat the Russians and to fill the gap. But that's totally different than the reconciliation tactics tasked by Task Force 134 and the other groups. How would you -- how is your whole COIN program being received by the senior generals in the Army?

COL. ROPER: Let me try to rephrase that question to see if I fully understand the context of it. Is this the tension that exists between -- operating in what's sometimes characterized as a low- intensity or counterinsurgency environments versus the high end of the -- you know --

Q Absolutely.

COL. ROPER: -- the major combat operations?

Q Absolutely. Yes, sir.

COL. ROPER: Is that the focus of the question?

Q That's exactly it.

MR. HOLT: I believe he said, yes, sir, that's exactly it.

COL. ROPER: Okay. I mean, I think you're probably aware the Army just published its new operations doctrine, Field Manual 3-0, which is really our blueprint on how we see operations in the foreseeable future. And the Army, I think, has done a good job of looking reality in the face, not describing things the way we want it to be but describing it the way things are where the U.S. military, and the U.S. in particular, has got to be full-spectrum capable. That does not mean every unit can do everything, equal capability all the time, everywhere. It's obviously something that we have got to prioritize and focus where we need to go.

Kind of going back to an earlier question, from talking to our NATO contemporaries and counterparts, this was a discussion point that we don't see the option

of picking what end of the spectrum that we want to excel at to the exclusion of the others. With the U.S. military in particular, it's got to have the capability to operate in all domains in partnership with coalition partners and allies and with the rest of the power of the U.S. government.

But there's absolutely some tension there, because we all live in a resource-constrained environment, and you have to take risks and figure out what you're going to put your money and your time and your energy against. So again, not a clean answer to your question, but I think that's a question we have to keep ourselves is, where do we want to focus?

The chief of staff of the Army has given some guidance for where the Army needs to focus, where he really calls the aim point. Meaning that we've got to be able to get up to the very high level of operations and have the systems that will enable us to fight a near- peer competitor under any circumstances as well as have the capability we've got right now in the counterinsurgency realm.

So again, it's a very good question. We need to ask ourselves that on a daily basis.

- Q Great, thank you.
- Q Jack, if there's time later on, I'd love to follow up. I know there's other people here.

MR. HOLT: Okay, yeah. FbL.

Q Hi, this is FbL with thedonovan.com.

You said that there have been mixed improvements in the ISF and in the CLCs. Can you give me more specific examples of the range of capabilities and both the range of issues that you're seeing?

COL. ROPER: What I got from talking to the MITT trainers and from talking to the units that were partnering with the Iraqi army and the Iraqi police forces of different flavors, the Iraqi national police and the Iraqi local police, is, in general -- and this is a generalization that does not apply across the board -- it's a little easier for soldiers to train other soldiers to do soldier things. Which kind of led to, in general, a better capability of the Iraqi army units that had not been filtrated by any of the extremist organizations that might have got into some of the other organizations. So the trend existed at the time I was there. And it seems to be continuing along that path. As Iraqi army units can do capable, tactical-level operations, the challenge is to some of the logistical support to that, And that's based on the fact that they came -- you know, basically the Iraqi army has reconstituted and was built upon the ashes of a system that for 30 years had been run by basically the dictum that units got re-supplied and they got new things if Saddam wanted them to get it and not if they needed it but just if he decided they would get it or not. And

as a result, there's a real atrophy in their logistical system that's almost beyond comprehension for somebody from the United States military.

Going to the police, the potential for greater corruption in the police forces where that was much harder for the U.S. and coalition forces to root out, not necessarily knowing who the good guys were and who the good guys were. And in some cases, the guy might be wearing a uniform during the day, but at night he may be supporting some insurgent-like activity. So I think the area that carried the biggest risk was within the police forces.

Within the concerned local citizens, it's another matter. Again, it's kind of -- I think it's gone to the next level since I left. But what was occurring then was it was just the initial phases of getting them on the street and on the payroll and some vetting to ensure that there weren't any hardcore, irreconcilable criminals in there. But everything I just said is very -- the context is critical, and it's different from one city to the other, and it's different from one part of Baghdad to the other.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir.

And Nicholas -- Nicholas Beaudrot.

Q Yes, hi, sorry. This is Nicholas Beaudrot from Cojathomas (sp).

I'm wondering if you're concerned that the window of opportunity created by the security progress is going to close if there's not further progress on economic stability and political stability at the national level.

COL. ROPER: The short answer is yes, I am concerned with that. And I think many people share that concern. Security progress is unmistakable. It's not completely uniform. But there isn't much dispute that, in general, it's moving in a proper direction.

But you know, equally beyond dispute is there has got to be some positive movement in the other areas that give the bulk of the Iraqi people confidence that their government is going to look after their interests. And ultimately, our efforts, our partner's efforts and the Iraqi government and security force efforts have go to convince people in the center, the people who can potentially go one way or the other, that they are best served by supporting their government no matter how many growing pains it's got to go through. That ultimately the Iraqi government is going to best serve the interests of the Iraqi people and that they do not allow some kind of extremist regime to ruin their lives.

Q Do you have a sense of how long we have before the frustration really builds up?

COL. ROPER: I honestly do not.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. HOLT: All right.

Spencer.

Q Hey, thanks. Great questions on this. If I could build off David and Nick's question but from a slightly different angle. We talked a bit about Iraqi political reconciliation but not so much about what we're doing in support of that. And Colonel, you said that all elements of our national power and national capability have not made its way to the ground in a degree and way you can succeed in a sustained manner and comprehensive COIN ops. That is huge from a historical perspective, when looking at COIN ops in the past, that that's really, to use the 9/11 commission's phrase, the system really blinking red.

And it seems like from everyone here, I'm sure, who's been in Iraq and (admitted ?), you know, all we ever see and interact with in a sustained way are soldiers and Marines and not, you know, people from the Justice Department, the State Department, USAID and blah, blah, blah.

And so I'm wondering, in a general level, what kind of, you know, efforts you're still playing and using with what kind of urgency to get other elements of national power onboard. I know General Lute's been trying to do this for quite some times since he's been the war czar. But you know, what's your impression at the Combined Arms Center about what needs to be done here, what you've seen on the ground here and your expectations that, at this late date, you'll have any success in getting civilian agencies into the fight?

COL. ROPER: What I'd tell you is that -- I mean, just so I make sure I don't gloss over this. The civilian members of the PRTs, whom I have the opportunity to interact with, were absolutely tremendous, patriotic Americans that were just as brave and just as dedicated as U.S. soldiers and U.S. Marines. The sad fact is there weren't nearly enough of them in order to bring their great skills to bear.

Some things that are ongoing within the U.S. Army to help support that, even though it's ultimately a civilian capability we need to get there, is the development of a training strategy that jointly trains transition teams -- you know, MITTs, military transition teams or police transition teams -- and also provides the capability to train -- provide a training vehicle for the provincial reconstruction teams.

And, again, this is developing the institutional capability well after we've identified the operational requirement on the ground. So there is a -- there is a flash-to-bang time on making the proper investment there, and then where does the U.S. get the civilians to do that. Just changing somebody's job title within different departments and agencies does not necessarily get you the deployable person that's got the training and the attitude and the expertise to excel in an environment where they really have to make a lot of it up on their own.

Some grounds for encouragement, albeit limited encouragement, is the U.S. government, in October 2007, published the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide that was signed by the Defense Department, the State Department and USAID at the assistant secretary level, so it's not binding and it's not policy, but it suggests the need to better work as a -- as an interagency U.S. government team. Ultimately -- (audio break) -- a good idea is one thing, resourcing is something else, and I would just say that the secretary of Defense made some statements and some speeches a couple of months ago that the U.S. has got to figure out where it wants to invest its limited resources. It doesn't just send the military to war, the nation's at war. And when we make a decision to stay in sustained combat, we've got to have the right capabilities, and there's some great people trying to figure it out, but we haven't backed it up with the money, the people and the time to do this thing right on a sustained basis.

Q Can I just ask when that's signed -- when the thing was signed? I didn't catch that.

COL. ROPER: October 2007.

Q Thanks.

MR. HOLT: Okay. And I know we're running short on time, here. We've got one more online. Jarred? Jarred, you still with us?

Okay. I -- we've got time for one more -- did anybody else join us?

Q Yes, I did. It's Paul McLeary from DTI.

MR. HOLT: Okay, Paul.

Q Hi, Colonel.

You were speaking about where we're going to -- you know, where the United States is going to invest its limited resources. One place you ought to, obviously, is funding the CLC groups.

You know, it's pretty expensive, it's getting more expensive over time, and I was wondering what -- if at the Counterinsurgency Center, if you're kind of wargaming what to do with these guys once you start pulling out or once the Iraqi army starts moving into the areas where they're operating. Because I was just there a month ago, and some of the areas where the CLCs are operating, they were basically telling me that they're going to fight the army when they start moving into the area. So I was wondering what kind of work you're doing there.

COL. ROPER: We're not explicitly working it from here. Again, our --we're more focused on -- from the institutional perspective of the military, preparing the individuals,

the units and the teams that deploy. And the CLCs are, obviously, Iraqis that are recruited jointly by the Iraqis and the coalition forces that are on the ground.

I saw a statement Lieutenant General Odierno made shortly after coming back from MNTI Command, and I believe he said that approximately 20 percent of the people that were recruited into the CLCs were -- or the Sons of Iraq now -- were going to make their way into the Iraqi security -- you know, actually, the Iraqi police or maybe the Iraqi army because of the different requirements physical and so forth for them to -- to meet those demands and those criteria.

But it's an initial step -- the CLC by itself is not -- is not any kind of long-term strategy. It does an initial bit of vetting, it gets the bad guys off the street, it gets them, you know, in the tent, and then it's up to the Iraqi government and the Iraq governance processes to provide them the economic opportunity to have some other meaningful form of employment.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. Thank you very much. And we're out of time here, unfortunately. Great discussion. Thank you, Colonel. Colonel Daniel S. Roper, the director for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, thank you very much for joining us, sir. And, hopefully, we can speak to you again.

COL. ROPER: Thank you. Look forward to it. Appreciate your time, appreciate your interest.

MR. HOLT: Thank you very much, sir.

O Thanks.

Q Thanks, Colonel.

COL. ROPER: Thank you.

END.